

WASHINGTON - The Department of Justice today announced a settlement agreement under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with Utah College of Massage Therapy (UCMT) that will require the college to provide sign language interpreters and other auxiliary aids to students who need them as required by the ADA.

The settlement is the result of a compliance review of UCMT the Department conducted after receiving complaints from students and applicants that are deaf that they had encountered resistance when they requested a sign language interpreter.

UCMT is based in Salt Lake City and has seven campuses located in Utah, Arizona, Colorado and Nevada, each of which offers nine-month programs in massage therapy. After the investigation began, UCMT was acquired by FCNH Inc. FCNH informed the Department that it wanted UCMT to be in compliance with the ADA and worked cooperatively with the Department to reach an agreement. Under the agreement, each UCMT campus will provide auxiliary aids and services, including a sign language interpreter where appropriate, thereby enabling students who have visual or hearing disabilities to participate in the academic and clinical components of the UCMT program.

"We commend UCMT for taking steps to ensure that people who are deaf or hard of hearing have the same opportunity as others to gain admission to colleges and other educational institutions," said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "I hope that this agreement will be a model for other institutions that provide specialized training that serve as gateways to professional employment opportunities."

The Americans with Disabilities Act, which was signed into law by former President George H. W. Bush on July 26, 1990, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The Department's ADA regulations apply to private businesses and non-profit service providers, and the programs and services of state and local governments.